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CIA Briefs Reagan on Middle East Crisis

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MIDDLEBURG, Va.—Republican presidential candidate Ronald Reagan got his first briefing from the Central Intelligence Agency Saturday—but only on the Middle East crisis.

Until now, the former California governor has steadfastly refused to accept President Carter's offer of a CIA briefing, contending that his own sources of information are adequate for campaign purposes.

But after the Iran-Iraq war broke out, Reagan decided to accept the offer, insisting that the briefing be limited to the Middle East, because he did not want to be inhibited in his future attacks on Carter by any unnecessary access to classified information.

Session 'Most Interesting'

When the two-hour session ended at his leased estate near here, Reagan called it "most interesting."

For more than an hour before the briefing began, Reagan was closeted with some of his defense and foreign policy advisers—former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, former White House chief of staff and NATO commander Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., and the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Thomas H. Moorer.

Reagan then was accompanied into the briefing—conducted by the CIA director, Adm. Stansfield

Turner, and his aides—by his running mate, George Bush. CIA director four years ago, gave Carter his briefing as the then-Democratic presidential nominee.

Bush told reporters that Reagan's briefing covered the Iran-Iraq fighting and touched briefly on conditions in Afghanistan and on the U.S. hostages held in Iran.

Feel Better Informed

"It was a professional, non-policy briefing," Bush said, "and we do feel better informed."

Reagan has been sharply critical of Carter's handling of foreign policy matters, particularly in the Middle East. The Republican candidate was a strong admirer of the late Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi and has attacked Carter for not using U.S. force or influence to assist the shah's regime against the revolution in Iran. He has charged that the fighting between Iran and Iraq would not have started if the shah had been in power.

But Bush, whose background as CIA director has not been emphasized much in the Reagan-Bush campaign, told reporters after the briefing that "it was not our purpose to get information with which to attack President Carter."

"We are not going to sally forth from here to launch an attack on the President. Our purpose was to understand force levels in the area, what some of the best minds in the

intelligence community feel is happening in the war."

Bush said he was impressed with the professionalism of the briefing officers and said "we feel uninhibited" by the briefing.

Under usual CIA briefing procedures, each recipient is required to "sign off" or acknowledge receipt of the individual facts given them. These acknowledgements go into intelligence files so authorities have a record of what was and wasn't given to those briefed.